



Environmental Bulletin

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from the Savannah River Site

DOE-SR to prepare EA for interim measures at Mixed Waste Management Facility

The Department of Energy-Savannah River Operations Office (DOE-SR) will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the environmental impacts associated with proposed interim measures to delay groundwater movement at the Savannah River Site (SRS) Mixed Waste Management Facility located at the Burial Ground Complex (BGC).

DOE-SR proposes to install a small metal sheet pile wall dam (approximately 5 to 7 feet high and 330 feet long) to impound about 1½ acres of water around and over the BGC southwest groundwater seep line. This action would be taken in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control to reduce the amount of tritium-contaminated water seeping to the surface from the BGC southwest plume and eventually discharging to an onsite stream, Fourmile Branch.

The impoundment would retard surface water flow to Fourmile Branch by increasing travel time, thereby mitigating the discharge of tritium-contaminated water. In addition, a drip irrigation system is being evaluated to enhance the effectiveness of the interim measure. This feature would further minimize discharges to Fourmile Branch by pumping impounded water behind the dam during peak flow conditions to upstream locations.

This interim measure is intended to control the movement and discharge of contaminated groundwater until the final, more permanent measure is taken. The EA will also evaluate several alternatives to the proposed action. A notification of DOE's intent to prepare this EA has been sent to the affected states. If you wish to request a copy of the draft EA when it becomes available, please contact NEPA Compliance Officer, Andrew Grainger.

Public Meeting on Treatment of Idaho Sodium-Bonded Spent Nuclear Fuel

A public meeting to discuss alternatives being evaluated in the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) on treatment and management of sodium-bonded spent nuclear fuel located at Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) will be held Tuesday, Aug. 17, North Augusta Community Center, 495 Brookside Drive, 6 - 9 p.m.

Alternatives in the draft EIS include stabilizing the material at management facilities at INEEL, at Argonne National Laboratory or at SRS through F Canyon or with the melt and dilute process in 105-L. The stabilized material will eventually be moved to a geologic repository for permanent disposal. The draft EIS does not list a preferred alternative.

Please call 1-877-450-6904 or send a facsimile to 1-877-621-8288 to make public comments or to request to speak at the public meeting. The public comment period will last through Sept. 13.

Be a part of the Citizens Advisory Board

• Applications available by calling 1-800-249-8155 or from our website www.srs.gov



• Membership drive runs from August 28 -- November 19

• Candidate selection will be conducted in December.

NEPA Compliance Officer

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Revised FONSI issued for Constructed Wetland at SRS

In 1998, DOE prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-1246) to analyze potential consequences associated with the construction of a wetland to treat effluent discharged from the A-01 outfall at SRS. DOE needed to implement this proposed action to reduce the copper concentration and the chronic toxicity of the outfall effluent before new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) outfall limits were scheduled to go into effect at SRS. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued for the proposed project on October 10, 1998.

To better define the scope and concurrently reduce the cost of this proposed project, a revision of the project scope has resulted in the following: (1) elimination of the piped collection system; (2) separation and relocation of the flow equalization basin and the wetland cell facility; and (3) downstream relocation of the NPDES compliance sampling point. Based on the fact that this scope revision is a combination of the previous proposed action and one of the alternatives and impacts are comparable to those presented in the EA, DOE has concluded that the environmental impacts of the proposed revision of the A-01 outfall constructed wetlands project is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Therefore, DOE has issued a revised FONSI and Floodplain Statement of Findings.

If you wish to request a copy of the revised FONSI, the Floodplain Assessment, and the Biological Evaluation for the revised project scope, please contact Andrew R. Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer.

EA being prepared on LEU Transfer/Loading System at SRS

DOE has determined that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared to analyze potential consequences associated with the construction and operation of a proposed low enriched uranium (LEU) transfer/loading system at the Savannah River Site (SRS), located near Aiken, South Carolina. Recently, DOE and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) determined that it is technically feasible to convert off-specification highly enriched uranium (HEU) to LEU for use as commercial fuel in TVA reactors. Before off-spec HEU can be transferred offsite, SRS must have the onsite capability to transfer or load the LEU solution into specially designed and NRC-approved liquid containers for shipment.

The proposed action would consist of both the LEU transfer/loading facility and the upgrades or changes to the limited Canyon process equipment necessary to support the operation of that facility. SRS has further determined that supplementary equipment additions and/or upgrades are necessary to H Canyon and the analytical laboratory to increase product throughput and analysis turn-around time. The conversion and transportation of the LEU solution were addressed previously in the final programmatic environmental impact statement on the disposition

of surplus HEU (DOE/EIS-0240).

DOE will send a notice of intent to prepare this EA to South Carolina and Georgia in August 1999. If you wish to request a copy of the draft EA when it becomes available, please contact Andrew R. Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer.

Draft Paths to Closure Document available

The draft 1999 SRS Paths to Closure (PtC) document is currently available for public comment and review. The public comment period is in effect through Sept. 3, 1999. In addition, the draft PtC will be discussed at the Risk Management and Future Use Subcommittee meeting on Monday, Aug. 30, 6:00 p.m., at the Aiken Federal Building, Aiken, S.C.

To obtain a copy of the draft SRS PtC, please call George Mishra, DOE-SR, (803) 725-7239, or Jim Moore, WSRC, (803) 725-5663.

for more information

For additional information or to request a public meeting contact:

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INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

- DOE Public Reading Room, Gregg-Graniteville Library, USC-Aiken, Aiken, SC
- Thomas Cooper Library, Government Documents Department, USC-Columbia, Columbia, SC
- Reese Library, Augusta State University, Augusta, GA
- Asa H. Gordon Library, Savannah State University, Savannah, GA

INTERNET ACCESS
SRS Home Page
<http://www.srs.gov>

Current NEPA actions affecting SRS

• **Accelerator for Production of Tritium (APT) (DOE/EIS-0270)**, The Secretary has selected the Commercial Light Water Reactor (CLWR) as the primary tritium production technology with APT as backup. Publication of the final EIS was March 12, 1999. A consolidated ROD for Tritium Supply and Recycling was issued May 6, 1999.

• **Tritium Extraction Facility (TEF) (DOE/EIS-0271)**, The Secretary has selected the CLWR as the primary tritium production technology with APT as backup. Publication of the final EIS was March 12, 1999. A consolidated ROD for Tritium Supply and Recycling was issued May 6, 1999.

• **Offsite Shipments of SRS Waste**, The draft EA is currently being prepared. A decision (FONSI or EIS) is expected third quarter, 1999.

• **SRS Spent Nuclear Fuel (DOE/EIS-0279)**, The draft EIS was issued December 17, 1998. Public meetings were held January 28, 1999, in Columbia, SC and February 4, 1999, in North Augusta, SC. Publication of the final EIS is projected for August, 1999.

• **DOE Waste Management (DOE/EIS-0200)**, Multiple RODs will be issued. Planned RODs are High Level Waste storage, July, 1999 and Low Level Waste (LLW)/Low Level Mixed Waste (LLMW), September 1999. A supplemental analysis for new waste amounts is being developed by DOE.

• **Interim Remediation Measures for the Mixed Waste Management Facility (MWMF)**, The draft EA is currently being prepared. A decision (FONSI or EIS) is expected third quarter, 1999.

• **Closure of High Level Waste Tanks at SRS (DOE/EIS-0303)**, The NOI was issued December 29, 1998 (63FR71628). The public scoping meetings were held January 14, 1999, in North Augusta, SC, and January 19, 1999 in Columbia, SC. Publication of the draft EIS is projected for August 1999. Publication of the final EIS is projected for February 2000.

• **Surplus Plutonium Disposition (DOE/EIS-0282)**, Public comments are being addressed and the final EIS is being prepared. The expected issue date for the final EIS and ROD, third quarter 1999. A draft Supplemental EIS for impacts on reactor sites was released in May, 1999.

• **Wetland Mitigation Bank Program (DOE/EA-1205)**, The public comment period was extended to accommodate the receipt of SC and local stakeholder comments. A decision FONSI was signed and issued April 28, 1999.

• **Par Pond Dam Repair Project (DOE/EA-1285)**, The draft EA is currently being prepared. A decision (FONSI or EIS) is expected third quarter, 1999.

• **Salt Disposition Alternatives SEIS (DOE/EIS-0082-52)**, The NOI was issued February 22, 1999. The public scoping meetings were held in Columbia, SC on March 11, 1999, and in North Augusta, SC, on March 18, 1999. The public scoping period ended April 8, 1999. Publication of the draft EIS is projected for October, 1999.

EA -- Environmental Assessment

EIS -- Environmental Impact Statement

FONSI -- Finding of No Significant Impact

NOI -- Notice of Intent

ROD -- Record of Decision

Recent Citizens Advisory Board recommendations

The SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) met July 26-27, 1999. The following were major outcomes of the meeting.

• **Recommendation 92** -- The Board endorsed the conclusions of the DNFSB report regarding interim maximization of canyon usage for spent fuel stabilization and requested a presentation from DOE on uncertainties with the melt and dilute option cited within the report.

• **Recommendation 93** -- The Board recommended that work suspensions in the Federal Facility Agreement not occur and requested information on the cause of a temporary suspension in progress. The CAB recommended that any suspended work be restarted as soon as possible but no later than November 15, 1999.

• **Recommendation 94** -- The Board concurred

with the Solid Waste System Plan recommendations to use the trenches for disposal of low-level waste that meet the trench waste acceptance criteria, rather than utilizing expensive vault space unnecessarily.

• **Recommendation 95** -- The Board relayed its concerns in contractor replacement of the High Level Waste In-Tank Precipitation Process and requested information regarding the reasons DOE decided to change contractors and the expected incremental cost increase and schedule delay associated with this action. The CAB requested that DOE consider retaining the current contractor and that efforts be devoted to improvement in project management.

The Board issued a letter concurring with the selected remedial strategy for the L and P Area Bingham Pump Outage Pits.

The Board also commended SRS for its timely notification regarding a potential groundwater contamination plume in the A/M Northern Sector, which was determined not to exist following months of sampling.

The Board approved funds for an independent scientific peer review of the Old Radioactive Waste Burial Ground closure.

A letter supporting transportation statements developed at a national meeting of all the Site Specific Advisory Boards was approved.

The Board also approved the final draft versions of a CAB informational video; a membership solicitation plan; speaker bureau presentations and scripts and plans to participate in two expos and two conferences.

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